

Indoor Bonsai Care Sheet

Also includes Tillandsias (Air Plants)

Bonsai are miniature trees grown in pots. The Bonsai culture is to capture the essence, spirit and elements of a aged large tree grown in its natural setting.

Bonsai allow you to create a living art form in your own home. They are a fun way to be challenged; but with proper care can be very rewarding.



Care:

Light: Medium to bright indirect light.

Water: Keep soil evenly moist.

Not wet /Not dry.

Misting: One to Three times per day to increase humidity.

Fertilizer: Feed once a month with all purpose fertilizer.

See inside for more care instructions.

*A Flower World Where
Plants & People Need Each Other*



Tillandsias

Air Plants

Tillandsias are air plants that live in the tropical rainforests of Latin America. Mostly they are found clinging to tree branches, rocks and some are even found on the sides of desert cactus.

Tillandsias absorb moisture and nutrients through their leaves, not through their root systems. This makes them unusual and different than other plants. They can all get beautiful, long lasting blooms. After flowering they produce baby plants to the side which will grow. These will flower next. Tillandsias can be glued to wood or shells and are best placed where it is humid.

Care:

Light: Medium to bright indirect light.

Water: Mist or submerge in water 2 to 3 times per week.

Fertilizer: Feed monthly with all purpose fertilizer, by misting with fertilizer water.

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History of Bonsai:

The art of Bonsai comes from ancient culture. It originated in China and was then developed by the Japanese. During the 13th Century the Japanese collected dwarf wild trees, potted them and sold them. As the demand for these grew, the Japanese began to train native trees; they would shape them to create age and to simulate a natural setting.

Currently many people are growing Bonsai at home and tropical varieties are being used for growing indoors. As a living art form it makes a great conversation piece.

Starting Your Bonsai:

First choose a starter plant that will be appealing to you and fits your plans of shaping. Then select a pot for your Bonsai to go into. For a starter plant in a 4" pot, a Bonsai dish 2" deep with a 4"-5" diameter is ideal.

Place a small stone or piece of screen over the hole in the bottom of the pot to prevent soil from washing out. Remove your Bonsai starter plant and gently shape the roots to fit the new Bonsai pot. Do this by massaging the roots with fingertips to avoid damaging roots. Plant in pot with cactus soil.

Add pebbles or stone on top for decoration. Copper wire can then be added for shaping if desired. (See Styles)



Watering:

The timing between watering depends on the size of your Bonsai and how much light and humidity your plant receives. Keep soil evenly moist: not wet, not dry. When soil is slightly dry water thoroughly, then drain any excess water away. The main killers of most Bonsai are root rot or dehydration. Rot is caused from watering too often or being left to sit in excess water. Dehydration is caused from not enough water or timing between watering is too great.



Misting:

Bonsai require humidity. Misting the leaves on a daily basis will help to increase extra humidity for your plant, usually morning is best. It is important that the leaves be dry by evening to prevent rot. Another way to increase humidity is to use a pebble tray. To do this use a larger saucer, fill with rocks, pebbles or even a smaller upside down saucer. Set your plant on top and keep larger saucer always filled with water. The water will evaporate and create more humidity. The key with using a pebble tray is to make sure the water level is never touching the bottom of your pot, since that would create root rot.

Light:

Medium to bright indirect light. The ideal location is morning sun (East Window) or late afternoon sun (West Window). A South window is okay if the plant is set back from the window. Never expose your plant to direct sunlight, this may cause burns and harm your plant.

Fertilizer:

Bonsai like to be fed monthly with an all purpose fertilizer. Indoor Evergreen types like Junipers can be fed with a higher nitrogen food like 30-10-10 monthly during spring and summer to support new greener growth. Flowering types can be fed with an flowering plant food monthly in spring and summer to promote flowers.

Repotting / Root Pruning:

Repotting is usually necessary every three to five years. At this time they may require a new larger pot (one size up) or they can be root pruned and planted back into the same pot. Use a soil that is sandy for Bonsai; cactus soil works well.

To prune roots, loosen up roots gently and trim off part of them. Return plant to original pot and plant in new soil. When roots are pruned, it is recommended pruning the branches to compensate for roots lost.



Styles of Bonsai (Shaping):

Current style forms of Bonsai are taking a more relaxed approach.

There are five traditional styles:

Semi cascade - A curving trunk that does not reach the bottom of the pot. Good style for Junipers.

Cascade - Resembles a tree growing off an embankment; the trunk curving below the bottom of pot.

Formal Upright - An easy style that features a straight trunk.

Informal Upright - The trunk bends and curves slightly to side or front.

Slanting - The trunk has up to a 45° angle from the pot with its low branches in the opposite direction.



Copper wire can be spiraled gently around trunk and main branches to train to your desired shape. Regularly, gently bend wired branches and train them to grow in a particular direction. Once the look is achieved remove the wires. Training may take a few years to do.

Pruning:

Pruning will help to keep your plant shaped and full. Use a clean pair of scissors or snips to trim branches that are in undesired locations or shooting up in the wrong direction. To keep plant looking full just trim the tips regularly to encourage new sprouts. This keeps the branches thick and full.